

Applicant: KRAENZEL *et al.*
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REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed October 11, 2006 (hereinafter "Office Action"), claims 3, 7, 9-11, 13, 16, 20, 22-24, 28, 32, and 34-36 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1-2, 5-6, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25-27, 30-31, 33, and 37 have been amended. No claims have been newly added. Therefore, claims 1-2, 4-6, 8, 12, 14-15, 17-19, 21, 25-27, 29-31, 33, and 37 are pending. Support for the instant amendments is provided throughout the as-filed Specification. Thus, no new matter has been added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following comments, allowance of all the claims pending in the application is respectfully requested.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 25, 2002, as evidenced by the signed and initialed copy of the PTO-1449 Form returned with the Office Action.

CLAIM OBJECTION

The Examiner has objected to claim 13 as allegedly being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim [Office Action, pg. 3, ¶4]. Solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, and without acknowledging the merits of the objection, claim 13 has been cancelled, rendering the objection moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of the claim objection is earnestly sought.

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REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 101

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter [Office Action, pg. 2, ¶3]. Although Applicants disagree with the rejection for at least the reason that the Examiner is improperly reading limitations into 35 U.S.C. § 101 on the subject matter that may be patented, claim 13 has been cancelled *solely* in an effort to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 has been rendered moot, and should be withdrawn.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,960,173 to Tang *et al.* (hereinafter "Tang") [Office Action, pg. 4, ¶8]. Applicants disagree with the propriety of the rejection. However, solely in an effort to expedite prosecution, one or more claims have been amended to clarify points of novelty over Tang.

In particular, independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, the features of:

enabling one or more users to declare, and associate information with, one or more topics, wherein associated information for a declared topic comprises at least one of a topic description, or one or more keywords relating to the topic;

storing declared topics and their associated information;

Independent claim 1 further recites:

monitoring computing activities of a user;

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determining if the user appears to be interested in a declared topic based on the monitored activities and based on the declared topic's associated information

Independent claims 14 and 26 include similar recitations. Tang, by contrast, teaches a mechanism that enables workers using their computers to know which other workers are “nearby” in terms of the type of work they are doing, such as the data they are accessing, the application they are using, and the time when such work was performed. Tang, column 3, lines 24-29. The mechanism is embodied within a computer network including computers running encounter-aware applications and corresponding encounter proxy objects that provide a communication mechanism to an networked encounter server. *Id.*, column 13, lines 29-32. The encounter server maintains a list of the encounter-aware applications on the computers within the computer network and receives information about each application from its encounter proxy. The server further maintains information identifying which application is currently active for the user. *Id.*, column 13, lines 61-67. The encounter server receives and stores status messages from the encounter proxy objects, wherein the status messages identifies at least the application and the user's position within the application. *Id.*, column 14, lines 3-10. The encounter server receives status messages and compares the received message with stored status messages and, based on a comparison, determines whether user's are task proximate. *Id.*, column 14, lines 18-35.

First, the system of Tang does not teach enabling one or more users to declare, and associate information with, one or more topics, wherein the associated information comprising at least one topic description, or one or more keywords related to the topic, as recited in claims 1, 14 and 26. As discussed above, Tang uses encounter-aware applications

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and encounter proxy objects to monitor activities on a computer and communicate with an encounter server. Based on information received and stored on the encounter server, task proximity is determined.

Moreover, Tang does not teach or suggest determining whether the user is interested in the declared topic based at least on the monitored activities and based on the declared topic's associated information, as presently recited in claims 1, 14 and 26. As discussed above, Tang does not allow users to declare topics and associate information with the declared topic. Therefore, Tang does not determine task proximity by at least a declared topic and associated information.

For *at least* the reason that Tang fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature of independent claims 1, 14, and 26, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper and should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 2, 4-6, 8, 12, 15, 17-19, 21, 25, 27, 29-31, 33, and 37 are allowable because they depend from allowable independent claims, as well as for the further features they recite.

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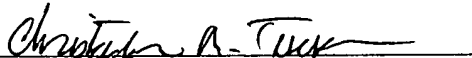
CONCLUSION

Having addressed each of the foregoing rejections, it is respectfully submitted that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the application is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Date: January 11, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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